أفلا يتدبرون القرآن؟

WILL YOU NOT THEN REFLECT?

Reflections in the Light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah

Ahmad Adetola-Kazeem (Abu Muhsin)
Abdulbasit Umar Balogun (Abu Umar)

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FORWARD

I have known Ahmad Adetola Kazeem (Abu Muhsin) for some years now through his beautiful social media posts and noble offline activities, even though we are yet to meet physically. I was overwhelmed by the way he keenly pursues and defends the interests and welfare of the downtrodden. By virtue of his law profession, he unremittingly works for the freedom of the unlawfully incarcerated, regardless of their social, cultural, tribal and religious affiliations. He is also an enviable and impassioned social worker who engages with young adults and inspires them. You will hardly escape the impression that this communal sense of responsibility is connected to lessons he might have drawn from his Tadabbur (Reflection) on relevant verses of the Qur'an.

Abu Muhsin has overtime benefitted his readers with nourishing social media writings, a substantial part of

which borders on lessons from his reflections on verses of the Qur'an and how same can be applied to day-to-day activities of a Muslim. This book "Will You Not Then Reflect?" Co-Authored with AbdulBasit Balogun (Abu Umar) is, therefore, a more detailed, more researched, and more beneficial extension of those writings. As someone understood to be blessed with a unique passion for knowledge and love for scholars; the author in this book, does not only articulately delve into the importance and benefits of Qur'anic reflection; he also invokes the insightful and inquisitive mind of an experienced lawyer to take the reader through practical steps, and necessary tools, methodologies, and challenges of reflection. All these are richly laced with examples and statements from the righteous predecessors.

As a long-time student of Tadabburul-Qur'an (the Qur'anic Reflection), I felt honoured when asked to write a foreword to this unique and novel work. I have read several books on Tadabbur in Arabic. In 2008, I had the privilege of being commissioned to translate into English, the first edition of Tadabbur periodical, published by the Global Committee for Qur'anic Reflection. However, "Will You Not Then Reflect" is the first book I have ever seen, primarily authored in English. I initially planned to read just parts of the book, but I ended up reading all. I really enjoyed it. I am sure readers are also going to find

the book enjoyable.

Indeed, this is a book. English readers who want to learn about the concept, intricacies, and techniques of Tadabbur cannot afford to miss. Those who seek increased Eemaan and enhanced righteous deeds through engagement with the Qur'an will find it immensely valuable. I am equally hopeful that this book will serve as a point from where more works on this all-important aspect of Islamic scholarship will spring.

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Part I

INTRODUCTION
TO REFLECTION

INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTION

One of the greatest pathways of achieving soundness of the heart, increase in Eeman, steadfastness and strength of the heart is by reciting the Qur'ān and pondering on its verses. For indeed Allāh revealed the Qur'ān to his servant to be a guide, mercy, light, glad tidings and remembrance to the believers.[1]

Allāh says:

كِتَٰبٌ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوٓاْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُوْلُواْ ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ

"[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you [O Prophet] so that they may contemplate its verses, and people of reason may be mindful." (Sad: 29)

[1] Shaykh Abdur-Razaq Ibn Abdul-Muhsin Al-Badr, Ahadith Islahil Qulub, Pg 117

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ ٱلْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَآءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۙ وَلَا يَزِيدُ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

"We sent down the Qur'ān as a healing and mercy for the believers, but it only increases the wrongdoers in loss." (Al-Israa: 82)

These beautiful verses mention some of the benefits contained in Allāh's book. Allāh has made the Qur'ān a blessed book and a guide to mankind. He has also made it a cure for diseases, especially those of the heart such as doubts, Riya (show off), hypocrisy, envy, jealousy, arrogance, sinfulness, heedlessness and unlawful desires. Allah has also made the Qur'an a glad tiding and mercy to the worlds and reminder to those who constantly remember Allāh. He made it a means of guidance to those who tread the straight path. He has also mentioned therein, signs and punishment, so that people will become righteous and remember Him often.[2]

The Scholars have given many definitions for Tadabbur (Reflection).

Shaykh Ali Bn Muhammad Ash-Shareef Al-Jurjaan (may Allāh have mercy upon him) defined Tadabbur (Reflection) linguistically as:

"An expression for looking at the consequences of

[2] Suratu 'TaHa': 113. See also Ahadith Islahil Qulub, Pg118, Shaykh Abdur-Razaq Ibn Abdul-Muhsin Al-Badr

matters and it is close to the meaning of at-Tafakkur except at-Tafakkur means to turn the heart towards the evidences". [3]

Dr. Musaa'id at-Tayyar (may Allāh preserve him) defined it thus:

"at-Tadabbur is to use the intellect to look at the verses of the Qur'an to reach their meanings, then to examine what is in those verses of rulings, benefits, knowledge, and action."[4]

Dr. Khalid as-Sabt (may Allāh preserve him) also defined it thus:

"It is to examine what is behind the words of the Qur'an in terms of meanings, lessons, and purposes, which will give fruit to beneficial knowledge and purified actions."[5]

The one who regularly ponders on the Qur'ān will have his heart purified. His heart will experience knowledge which will increase him in faith and strengthen it. Why won't that be so? When the heart experiences Allāh the Sovereign, the Almighty, the Merciful and the Most Generous.[6]

[3] At-Ta'reefaat pg. 76

[4] Mafhoom at-Tadabbur pg. 77-78

[5] Al-Khulaasah fi Tadabbur il-Qur'ān il-Kareem pg. 13

[6] Shaykh Abdur-Razaq Ibn Abdul-Muhsin Al-Badr, Ahadith Islahil Qulub, Pg 119

Al-Ajuri wrote:

"Whoever ponders His speech (the Qur'ān) deeply, recognizes the Lord, Mighty and Majestic; recognizes the magnificence of His grace upon the believers; and recognises what is due upon him of the obligation of worshipping Him. Thus, he imposes upon himself the need to adhere to the duty, is wary of that which his Generous Master has warned him against, and desirous of that which He has encouraged.

So, whoever has these qualities when reciting the Qur'an or listening to it from others, the Qur'ān is for him a Cure: thus, he becomes rich without material wealth, honoured without relatives and finds solace in situations where others are distressed. His concern when he begins reciting a surah is, "when will I be admonished by what I recite?" His objective is not, "When will I complete the surah?" Rather, his objective is, "When will I understand from Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, His address? When will I restrain myself? "When will I learn a lesson?" This is because the recitation of the Qur'an is an act of worship, and thus cannot be done with heedlessness, and Allāh is the one who grants capability for that."[7]

Ibn al-Qayyim (rahimahullāh) wrote:

[7] Imam Abu Bakr Muhammad Bn Husayn Al-Ajuri "The character of the bearers and people of the Qur'ān", P.19

“There is nothing more beneficial to the heart than reading the Qur'ān with contemplation and reflection. This is what inspires love and longing for Allāh. It generates fear of Him and hope in Him. It makes one turn in repentance to Him and rely on Him. It causes one to fully submit to him, leave matters in His Hands and be pleased with His Decree. It inspires patience and gratitude and is a means of acquiring all of the characteristics which give life to and perfect the condition of the heart.

If people knew what recitation of the Qur'ān with contemplation contains, they would devote themselves to it at the expense of anything else. When one reads with reflection and comes across an āyah that he needs to cure his heart, he repeats it. He may repeat it a hundred times, or even throughout the entire night, as was reported about the Prophet ﷺ and the early predecessors. Hence, reciting a single āyah of the Qur'ān with contemplation and reflection is better than reciting the entire Qur'ān without any contemplation or reflection.

This is more beneficial for the heart, more likely to increase one's Eeman and leads one to taste the sweetness of Eeman and the Qur'ān. This was the habit of the early predecessors, whereby one of them would repeat the same āyah throughout the night until morning came. Likewise, it has been reported that the Messenger

of Allāh ﷺ stood repeating one āyah till morning came."

For these reasons, Allāh the Most Generous, commands and encourages His slaves to ponder on the Qur'an. He says, may He be glorified:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِندِ غَيْرِ ٱللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا۟ فِيهِ ٱخْتِلَٰفًا كَثِيرًا

"Do they not then reflect on the Qur'ān? Had it been from anyone other than Allāh, they would have certainly found in it many inconsistencies" (An-Nisaa: 82)

He also says:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَآ

"Do they not then reflect on the Qur'ān? Or are there locks upon their hearts?" (Muhammad: 24)

Allāh further informs us that the Qur'an was indeed revealed so we could ponder on its verses. Allāh says:

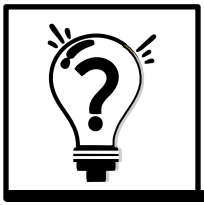
كِتَٰبٌ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوٓا۟ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُو۟لُوا۟ ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ

"[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you [O Prophet] so that they may contemplate its verses, and people of reason may be mindful." (Sad: 29)

When we recite the Qur'ān and ponder on its verses our faith increases. In this regard, Allāh says:

إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ ٱللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَـٰتُهُۥ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَـٰنًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

“The [true] believers are only those whose hearts tremble at the remembrance of Allāh, whose faith increases when His revelations are recited to them, and who put their trust in their Lord." (Al-Anfaal:2)



WHO CAN PONDER OVER THE QUR'AN?

In his Tafsir of Surah Muhammad verse 24, Shaykh Muhammad Al-Ameen Ash-Shinqiti (May Allāh have mercy him) said it is a wrong notion to say only the person who has reached the stage of a Mujtahid[9] can ponder on the verses of the Qur'ān. He said "It is incumbent on whoever has the ability to learn and understand the meaning of the Qur'an and Sunnah to learn it and act by what he learns from them."

Allāh criticized the disbelievers and hypocrites for not pondering over the meaning of the Book of Allāh, which means that at-Tadabbur is for everyone, those who believe and those who do not. It is not a condition to be a scholar in order to be able to understand and ponder over the verses.[10]

[9] Mujtahid means a person who possesses the aptitude to exercise independent reasoning (ijtihad) in the interpretation of Islamic Law.

[10] Adwaa al-Bayaan pg 252

Ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنهما read the verse:

وَكُنتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ ٱلنَّارِ فَأَنقَذَكُمْ مِّنْهَا ۗ

"And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it." (Aal 'Imraan: 103). When a Bedouin man heard it, he reflectively said, "By Allaah, Allaah would not have saved us from fire and yet wants to throw us back into it!" Upon hearing this, Ibn 'Abbas commented, "He is no scholar; but you may definitely take this from him!"[11]

In addition, those who do not understand the Arabic language can and should also ponder over the Qur'an. Reading a good translation of the Quran, consulting translated books of Tafsir, joining study groups or seeking guidance from scholars would assist them in this process. Those who cannot read should listen to explanation of the Qur'an by scholars and ponder over it.

It must however be mentioned that the one who understands the Arabic language is better placed to benefit more from the Qur'an because of the richness of the language. Similarly, much of the composition and etymological value of Qur'anic words is lost when translated.

Everyone is encouraged to learn the Arabic language in order to get the best from their reflections.

[11] Muhaadaraatul Udabaa p. 409

WHAT IS THE RULING ON REFLECTING ON THE VERSES OF THE QUR'AN

It is compulsory on every sane adult to reflect on the verses of the Qur'an.[12]

Imam Al-Qurtubi while interpreting:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَآ

"Do they not then reflect on the Qur'ān? Or are there locks upon their hearts?" (Muhammad: 24), wrote:

"This verse points to the obligation of reflecting on the Qur'an to establish its meaning."[13]

[12] Muqarrar Tadabbur Al-Qur'ān Al-Kareem pg 100

[13] Al-Jaami' Al-Ahkam Al-Qur'ān Lil Imam Al-Qurtubi 5/290

TOOLS NEEDED FOR REFLECTION

Below is a summary of some tools that will aid reflection as written by the authors of Muqarrar Tadabur Al-Qur'ān Al-Kareem.[14]

TOOLS RELATED TO THE HEART

1. Self-motivation and sincerity

It is incumbent on the one who wants to embark on the journey of reflecting on the Qur'ān to have inner motivation with sincerity which propels him to focus on the task and achieve the desired result. He won't be able to achieve this except he acknowledges the essence, importance and great benefits of pondering on the Qur'an in this world and the hereafter.

[14] Pp 188-205

Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

"Whoever ponders on the Qur'an seeking guidance in it, the path of truth will be made clear to him."[15]

2. Seeking Allāh's refuge against the accursed Shaytan.
Seek Allāh's assistance against the plot of Shaytan which may cause you to become lazy and abandon the task or causes you to be insincere along the line.

Allāh says:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ فَٱسْتَعِذْ بِٱللَّهِ مِنَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ٱلرَّجِيمِ

"When you recite the Qur'ān, seek refuge with Allāh from Satan, the accursed." (An-Nahl: 98)

3. Recognizing Allāh's Greatness and the Greatness of His words.

Before reading the Qur'ān and contemplating on its meaning, bring into your consciousness Allāh's greatness and the fact that you are about to read the greatest speech ever. When your heart is filled with awe for Allāh and His words, His light will engulf your heart and your reflection will become rich and exceedingly beneficial.

[15] Majmoo' Fatawah 3/137

4. Supplicating to Allāh for ease and consistency.

Most people don't pay attention to asking Allāh to aid them in lofty tasks as this. Many people are only concerned about mundane affairs and become cold when it comes to issues of the hereafter which is eternal and everlasting.

5. Loving the Qur'an and being preoccupied with it.

It is common knowledge that when a person loves a thing, he gets attached to it more than other things. When the heart loves the Qur'an it relishes its recitation. He is happy in the company of the Qur'ān, he sits with it reading, listening, memorizing and contemplating on its meaning for hours without getting bored.

6. Following the example of the Prophet and rightly guided predecessors in their relationship with the Qur'ān.

It is incumbent on the one who wants to reflect on the Qur'an to follow the example of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions in the recitation and reflection on the Qur'an. It is very beneficial if one is acquainted with the attitude of the one upon whom the Qur'an was revealed and those who lived with him.

Some of the approaches of the Prophet ﷺ to reflection as may be gleaned from ahadith is repeating a single verse

several times, reflecting on the verse(s) while on Solat, reading slowly with the rules of recitation and reading in the middle of the night. These points have been expanded upon under subsequent topics.

7. Admitting with absolute conviction that the Muslim is alive when he reflects on the Qur'an and dead when he doesn't.

Anyone who wants his heart to be alive in its true sense then let him consistently ponder on the verses of the Qur'ān; if not, he will live a miserable life in the true sense of it, and that is what Allāh warns us against in the verses below:

قَالَ ٱهۡبِطَا مِنۡهَا جَمِيعَۢاۖ بَعۡضُكُمۡ لِبَعۡضٍ عَدُوّٞۖ فَإِمَّا يَأۡتِيَنَّكُم مِّنِّي هُدٗى فَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشۡقَىٰ. وَمَنۡ أَعۡرَضَ عَن ذِكۡرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُۥ مَعِيشَةٗ ضَنكٗا وَنَحۡشُرُهُۥ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ أَعۡمَىٰ

"Allāh said, "Descend, both of you, from here together [with Satan] as enemies to each other. Then when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in this life] nor suffer [in the next]. But whoever turns away from My Reminder (The Qur'an) will certainly have a miserable life, then We will raise them up blind on the Day of Judgment."

We seek Allāh's refuge from that.

8. Recognizing that the words of the Qur'an are primarily directed at the heart.

One of the pointers to this is where Allāh says:

نَزَلَ بِهِ ٱلرُّوحُ ٱلْأَمِينُ. عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُنذِرِينَ

"which the trustworthy spirit [Gabriel] brought down into your heart [O Prophet]—so that you may be one of the warners—" (Ash-Shu'ara: 193-194)

Allāh did not say onto your hearing or sight etc. but into your heart. This is so because the heart is the leader of all body parts and with its soundness every other part is sound, and with its corruption other parts are corrupt.

9. Freeing the heart from being preoccupied with other than Allāh.

When you are reading and contemplating on the Qur'an, do it with absolute concentration. Don't be lost in thoughts with things of the world or getting distracted with your phone, TV, laptop or vain talks by friends and associates.

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرَىٰ لِمَن كَانَ لَهُۥ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى ٱلسَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

"Surely in this is a reminder for whoever has a [mindful] heart and lends an attentive ear." (Qaf: 37)

10. Keeping away from sins

Sins are darkness which prevents the light of remembrance from staying in the heart.

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyah mentioned one of the effects of sins in his book Al-Jawab Al-Kafi thus:
"Knowledge is a light which Allah throws into the heart and disobedience extinguishes this light. Imam Ash-Shafi`i said: "I complained to Wakee` about the weakness of my memory, so he ordered me to abandon disobedience and informed me that knowledge is light. He said that the light of Allah is not given to the disobedient.""

11. Eating and drinking moderately

Eating excessively prevents the heart from absorbing lessons of the Qur'an during reflection.

Luqman is reported to have told his son, "O my son, when the stomach is full the intellect sleeps, wisdom is muted, and the body parts abandon worship." [16]

12. Being humble and soft when reading the Qur'ān to reflect on its verses.

Humility and affirming the truth when it is apparent is one

[16] Mabādiu Tadabburul Qur'an p. 144

of the things that aids contemplation, for that reason, it is necessary for the believer to be humble. He should accept the truth when he sees it and when the Qur'ān reminds him he should heed the reminder.

Allāh commanded the Prophet ﷺ thus:

فَذَكِّرْ بِٱلْقُرْءَانِ مَن يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ

"So remind with the Qur'ān [only] those who fear My warning," (Qaf:45)

The Qur'an has no impact on the arrogant and prideful.

Allāh says:

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ ءَايَـٰتِىَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ

"I will turn away from my signs those who act unjustly with arrogance in the land." (Al-'A'raf: 146)

This is evidence that the arrogant will be deprived of the blessings of the Qur'an.

13. Striving and staying consistent

There is no doubt that the one who makes an attempt to start pondering on the Qur'an will face some challenges particularly at the inception. It is therefore incumbent on the one who wants to reflect on the Qur'ān to be very patient, pause and understand Allāh's intention through

the book of Tafsir, the context of each verse and how it applies to him, He then takes his reflection a step at a time, from a verse to verses then Surah until he attains proficiency.

Allāh says:

وَٱلَّذِينَ جَٰهَدُواْ فِينَا لَنَهۡدِيَنَّهُمۡ سُبُلَنَاۚ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَمَعَ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ

"As for those who struggle in Our cause, We will surely guide them along Our Way. And Allāh is certainly with the good-doers." (Al-'Ankabūt:69)

TOOLS NEEDED BY THE RECITER AND LISTENER TOWARDS REFLECTION AT THE TIME OF RECITATION

1. Freeing the mind from all distractions and directing the mind absolutely towards contemplation.

The lessons of the Qur'an are only beneficial to the one who has presence of mind.

Allāh says:

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرَىٰ لِمَن كَانَ لَهُۥ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى ٱلسَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

"Surely in this is a reminder for whoever has a mindful heart and lends an attentive ear." (Qaf: 37)

The author of Badāiu Tafsir said:

"The people are three: A man with dead heart, this one does not benefit from the Qur'an. A man whose heart is alive, he however doesn't pay attention to the Qur'an whether because he didn't interact with it or his mind wasn't present when listening, this one also does not benefit from the Qur'an. And a man whose heart is alive and when a verse is recited to him he listens with a present and attentive mind, this is the only one who is

impacted by the verses recited."[17]

2. Repeating the verses for impact on the heart.

One of the most important means to benefit fast from the Qur'an and its reflection is repeating the verses. This will rid the mind of heedlessness and make the one reflecting taste the sweetness of the Qur'an.

This was exemplified by the Prophet ﷺ and his companions.

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ: صَلَّى رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيلَةً فَقَرَأَ بِآيَةٍ حَتَى أَصْبَحَ يَرْكَعُ وَيَسْجُدُ بِهَا، "إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ العَزِيزُ الحَكِيمُ"، فَلَمَّا أَصْبَحَ قُلْتُ "يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ مَا زِلْتَ تَقْرَأُ هَذِهِ الآيَةَ حَتَّى أَصْبَحَتَ تَرْكَعُ بِهَا وَتَسْجِدُ بِهَا"، قَالَ "إِنِّي سَأَلْتُ رَبِّي الشَّفَاعَةَ لِأُمَّتِي فَأَعْطَانِيهَا وَ هِيَ نَائِلَةٌ إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ لِمَنْ لاَ يُشْرِكُ بِاللهِ شَيْئًا"

Abu Dharr reported: The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed at night reciting a single verse until morning, by which he would bow and prostrate, "If You punish them, they are Your servants. If You forgive them, You are the Almighty, the Wise," (5:118). In the morning, I said, "O Messenger of Allah, you continued to recite this verse until morning, bowing and prostrating by it." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily, I asked my Lord for the intercession of my nation and He gave it to me. It will be granted, if Allah wills, to whoever does not

[17] Badāi'u Tafsir 3/17-18

associate anything with Allah." [18]

On this occasion, the Prophet ﷺ preferred contemplation on that singular verse of the Qur'an over voluminous recitation, that he repeated only that one verse throughout the night.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allāh be pleased with him) wrote:

"If people knew what recitation of the Qur'ān with contemplation contains, they would devote themselves to it at the expense of anything else. When one reads with reflection and comes across an āyah that he needs to cure his heart with, he repeats it. He may repeat it a hundred times, or even throughout the entire night, as was reported about the Prophet ﷺ and the early predecessors. Hence, reciting a single āyah of the Qur'ān with contemplation and reflection is better than reciting the entire Qur'ān without any contemplation or reflection.

This is more beneficial for the heart, more likely to increase one's Eeman and leads one to taste the sweetness of Eeman and the Qur'ān."[19]

3) Beautifying the voice when reciting for reflection.

"The benefit of beautifying the voice when reciting the

[18] Musnad Ahmad 21328

[19] Miftahu Dari Sa'adah 1/187

Qur'ān is that it penetrates the mind and encourages paying attention to it and makes the words clear to the ears and the meanings clear to the heart and it makes one appreciate better what is intended."[20]

The Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to beautify our voices during recitation. He said:

زَيِّنُوا القُرْآنَ بِأَصْوَاتِكُمْ

"The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: 'Beautify the Qur'ān with your voices.'" (Sunan an-Nasa'i 1016)

He also said:

لَيسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَتَغَنَّ بِالقُرْآنِ

"Whoever does not recite Qur'an in a nice voice is not from us."[21]

4) Choosing a place, venue and time suitable for reflection

A place, time and venue free of noise and distraction is indispensable to getting the most of reflection on the Qur'an. We should approach the Qur'an when our faculties are at the optimum nor when we are tired, stressed and feeling sleepy. Don't also forget making

[20] Al Jāmi' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'ān Lil Qurtubi 10/339

[21] Sahih al-Bukhari 7527

ablution and using the chewing stick before embarking on the task.

The night is one of the best times for reflection.

5) Reading the Qur'an properly in a measured manner when reflecting

One of the most important things that aid reflection on the Qur'ān is reading in a measured and tranquil manner. Your aim should not be to rush to the end of the Surah, the volume of recitation, or when you will finish recitation. Hastening in recitation is against the methodology prescribed in the Qur'ān and imbibed by the Prophet ﷺ and his companions.

Allāh says:

أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ تَرْتِيلًا

"or a little more—and recite the Qur'ān [properly] in a measured way." (Al-Muzzamil : 4)

Ibn Kathir (may Allāh be pleased with him) says:

"This means, recite it slowly, for that will help in understanding the Qur'an and contemplating it. This is how the Prophet ﷺ used to recite. A'ishah said, "He (the Prophet ﷺ) used to recite the chapter slowly, so much so that it would seem longer than chapters that were actually longer than it."

‘Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him), said:

“Do not scatter the Quran as if it were dates falling from a tree, nor recite quickly as if it were poetry. Stop at its verses that amaze you and let it move your hearts. Let not your concern be reaching the end of the surah.” [22]

6. Painting the picture of the occurrences relating to the verse(s) at the time of revelation.

Imam As-S'adi (may Allāh be pleased with him) said:

"Looking at the context of the verses with the knowledge of the situation of the Prophet ﷺ and his story with the companions and his enemies at the time of revelation is one of the greatest enablers of appreciating and understanding the intention of the verses." [23]

[22] Akhlāq Ḥamalat al-Qur'ān 1

[23] Taysirul Al-Kareemu Ar-Rahman P. 30

SOME PRACTICAL STEPS THAT GUARANTEE BENEFICIAL REFLECTION

1) Reflecting under the guardianship of someone who has sound knowledge of the Qur'an. It could be a learning circle with a scholar or student of knowledge, a family learning circle, engagement with friend or in form of question etc.

If one lacks one or more of the tools mentioned earlier, this approach will be required to reduce the possibility of errors to a bare minimum. This methodology is supported by the popular hadith reported by Abu Hurairah. The Prophet ﷺ said:

وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللهِ وَ يَتَدَارَسُونَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِلاَّ نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ السَّكِينَةَ وَغَشِيَتْهُمْ الرَّحْمَةَ وَحَفَّتْهُمُ المَلاَئِكَةَ هُمُ وَذَكَرَ اللهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ

"Those persons who assemble in the house among the houses of Allāh (mosques) and recite the Book of Allāh and they learn and teach the Qur'an (among themselves) there would descend upon them tranquility and mercy would cover them and the angels would surround them and Allāh mentions them in the presence of those near Him" (Muslim 2699)

2. MAKING EFFORTS TO KNOW THE MEANING OF WORDS USED IN THE QUR'ĀN

There can't be a beneficial reflection without a firm knowledge of the meaning of the words used in the verses of the Qur'an. A book of Tafsir that focuses on explaining the meaning of the words succinctly without verbosity is essential in this regard. A highly recommended book of Tafsir in this regard is At-Tafsir Al-Muyyasar or Taysir Al-Kareem Ar-Rahman by Shaykh Abdur-Rahman Bn Nãsir As-S'adi.

The books mentioned above have been translated into the English language. For those who do not understand Arabic, a good English translation is essential to aid your reflection. The translations of Dr. Mustafa Khattab and Sahih International are recommended.

3. RECOURSE TO CERTIFIED BOOKS OF TAFSIR

The focus of reflection is to get the overall message in a verse, verses or an entire chapter of the Qur'an in order to internalize and apply them in our daily lives.

Good books of Tafsir will assist you in achieving the above objective. Once you know the intended meaning of a verse and you try to ponder on the essence of that verse, a good book of Tafsir will either confirm or negate the outcome of your reflection. Reading them will also open your minds to things you didn't know about the verse or

verses and thereby open new vista for reflection.

There are many good books of Tafsir but some I find very good for reflection are واحة التفسير (Wāhat At-Tafsīr) by Ahmad Bn Ahmad Muhammad Abdullah At-Taweel, other books I recommend in this regard are أضواء البيان (Ad Waaul Bayaan) by Shaykh Muhammad Al-Ameen Ash-Shinqiti and الثمين التفسير (At-Tafsir Ath-Thamiin) of Shaykh Ibn Uthaymin and Shaykh As-Sa'adi.

4. ASKING QUESTIONS

One of the greatest means of getting the most out of reflection on the Qur'an is asking pertinent questions.

The reader should stop and ask questions such as:

- Why did this Surah precede that?
- Why did this Surah have a special opening verse different from others?
- Why is a verse repeated more than once in this Surah?
- Why did this sentence come in this form in this verse but appears in another verse differently?
- Why does a surah have a special virtue that other Surahs do not have?

Think deeply about the answers within yourself before

consulting a book of Tafsir or a scholar. This will really sharpen your reflective capacities.

It is often said that "Knowledge is a treasure and its key is asking good question."[24]

5. FAMILIARITY WITH THE RULES OF ARABIC LANGUAGE AND ITS RHETORICAL METHODS

The Qur'an was revealed in plain Arabic language and a good grasp of the Arabic language and its rhetorics (Balagha) is an indispensable tool in aid of a beneficial reflection.

We must all make efforts to learn and get better in the language. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah said:

"Understanding the Qur'an and Sunnah is compulsory, and both cannot be properly understood except with an understanding of the Arabic language. A thing that an obligatory action cannot be accomplished without is also obligatory."[25]

6. UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT OF A VERSE OR WORD

The meanings of words change in line with the context with which they are used.

[24] Credited to Al-Imam Al-Haafiz Muhammad Bn Shihab Az-Zuhri (www.alukah.net)

[25] Iqtidahu As-Sirat Al-Mustaqeem

The one who reflects should pay attention to contextual meaning and not just usual meanings of words and verses.

7. KNOWING THE REASONS FOR REVELATION

Knowing the reasons for the revelation of a verse goes a long way in assisting one to understand the original intent of a verse. Even though the application of the meaning of a verse is not restricted to just one meaning or on the reasons for revelation alone, as explained by the scholars.

The popular maxim goes thus:

العبر بِعُموم اللّفظ لا بِخُصوص السبَب

"Rulings are based on the general meaning [of a revealed text], not on the specific reason for its revelation."

THINGS THAT HINDER REFLECTION ON THE QUR'ĀN AND CAUSES ERRORS

1. Having a faulty 'Aqeedah (Islamic Ideology)
2. Following desires which blinds and deafens from understanding the Qur'ān
3. Arrogance
4. Blind following a school of thought without recourse to the primary sources (the Qur'ān and authentic hadith).
5. Using verses of the Qur'ān that are ambiguous or have multiple possible meanings and abandoning verses that are clear and unambiguous.
6. Relying on weak Ahadith when reflecting on the Qur'ān and abandoning sound Ahadith in the process.
7. Ignorance of the abrogated verses and their abrogators leads to faulty understanding of the Qur'ān
8. Ignorance of the reasons for revelations.

9. Relying on Israiliyaat (Stories from the Jews and Christians) without confirming their authenticity.

10. Lack of knowledge of the meanings of Arabic words.

BENEFITS OF REFLECTION

1. Increase in Eemaan and its renewal

Allāh says:

إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ ٱللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَـٰتُهُۥ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَـٰنًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

"The [true] believers are only those whose hearts tremble at the remembrance of Allāh, whose faith increases when His revelations are recited to them, and who put their trust in their Lord." (Al-Anfaal: 2)

Many of the Salaf accepted Islam or abandoned sins just by listening and pondering on a verse or two of the Qur'an.

Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allaah be please with him) heard of his sister's conversion whilst enroute to assassinate the Messenger (peace & blessings of Allâh be upon him). He saw her with a Qur'anic parchment and angrily slapped her.

His sister then gave him the pages on which Surah Ta Ha was written. He had read only a few lines when he exclaimed in amazement, "How noble and sublime is this

speech!".

He subsequently embraced Islam and met with the Messenger in Dar al-Arqam.[26]

Fudayl Bn Iyad who would become a scholar and virtuous figure known for his wisdom, trustworthiness, piety and spirituality was once a highway robber, he was in fact the leader of his gang.

Fudayl had traced a lady to a compound, while sitting on the fence surveilling the environment he heard one of the occupants reading verse 16 of Suratul Hadid,

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَن تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُواْ كَٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِن قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَٰسِقُونَ

"Has the time not yet come for the believers' hearts to be humbled at the remembrance of Allāh and what has been revealed of the truth, and not be like those given the Scripture before— who were spoiled for so long that their hearts became hardened. And many of them are rebellious." (Suratul Hadid, 57:16)

[26] Even though it is plausible that most of the Prophet's companion were, one way or the other, influenced to accept Islam by their listening to the Qur'an; none of the stories related about 'Umar's acceptance of Islam is authentic. And this particular one was classified as منكـر (objectionable) by Adh-Dhahabi in Mizanul-I'tidaal. And Allah knows best.

The divine words of Allāh reached him deeply and liberated him from the clutches of his desires. The verse struck him. He paused and then climbed down from the walls while repeatedly muttering to himself, as if answering the verse, "certainly my Lord. the time has come".

2. By reflecting on the Qur'an you are obeying Allāh's command

Allāh has commanded us to reflect on the Qur'ān in plethora of verses in the Qur'ān.

Allāh says:

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا ٱلْقُرْءَانَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

"And We have certainly made the Qur'ān easy to remember. So is there anyone who will be mindful?" (Al-Qamar: 17)

The one who only reads and memorizes the Qur'an without understanding it is not different from the people of the book (Christians and Jews) whom Allāh describes in the Qur'an thus:

وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ إِلَّآ أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ

"And among them are the illiterate who know nothing about the Scripture except lies, and [so] they [wishfully] speculate." (Al-Baqarah: 78)

3. Through reflection we become more knowledgeable about Allāh, what he has made lawful and His prohibitions.

Allāh says:

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِم مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ هَٰؤُلَاءِ ۚ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

"[Consider, O Prophet,] the Day We will call against every faith-community a witness of their own. And We will call you to be a witness against these [people of yours]. We have revealed to you the Book as an explanation of all things, a guide, a mercy, and good news for those who [fully] submit." (An-Nahl: 89)

Ibn Kathir in his explanation of this verse mentioned that Ibn Mas`ud said:

"Allāh made it clear that in this Qur'an there is complete knowledge about everything. The Qur'an contains all kinds of beneficial knowledge, such as reports of what happened in the past, information about what is yet to come, what is lawful and unlawful, and what people need to know about their worldly affairs, their religion, their livelihood in this world, and their destiny in the Hereafter."

4. The one who reflects on the Qur'an find it easier to act by its dictates.

Whoever diligently reads and reflects on the Qur'an would realize it calls him to applying the lessons in it by doing righteous actions and avoiding sins. The words of Allah in Surah An-Nisa' points in this direction.

Allah says:

وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنِ ٱقْتُلُوٓاْ أَنفُسَكُمْ أَوِ ٱخْرُجُواْ مِن دِيَٰرِكُم مَّا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُواْ مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِۦ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيتًا

"If We had commanded them to sacrifice themselves or abandon their homes, none would have obeyed except for a few. Had they done what they were advised to do, it would have certainly been far better for them and more reassuring, and We would have granted them a great reward by Our grace."

In this verse is a lucid encouragement on the essence of acting by good advice which is rewarding to all believers in Allah.

Most people's relationship with the Qur'an is about seeking its blessing not about acting by its dictates. They seek with the Qur'an their heart desires but they fail to humble themselves to follow its dictates.

5. Reflection aids the soul's repentance to its Lord and its repentance from its sins.

The story of Fudayl Ibn Iyyad is an example of this.

6. Reflection cures the diseases of the heart.

Whenever the believer reflects on the Qur'an, he is cured of diseases of doubts and desires which veer him off the path of obedience and push him into sinning and commiting injustice.

Allāh says:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُم مَّوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَآءٌ لِّمَا فِى ٱلصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"O humanity! Indeed, there has come to you a warning from your Lord, a cure for what is in the hearts, a guide, and a mercy for the believers." (Yunus: 57)

7. The one who reflects on the Qur'an often is granted contentment in this world and his heart is attached to the hereafter and he longs for it.

Hassan Al-Basri said:

"O son of Adam, by Allāh if you read the Qur'ān and you believe in it, you will be more reflective and you will understand that nothing is really worth it in this world."[27]

[27] Az-Zuhd of Ibn Al-Mubarak p. 232

"Being pleased is Allāh's gift to his slave who reflects on his words. It is one of the lofty stations as mentioned by Ibn Al-Qayyim in his 'Al-Madārij', so also is contentment. He is pleased with Allāh, His religion and His Prophet first, then pleased and contented with what Allāh has given him of wealth and possession in this world and Allāh will bestow him His pleasure in the hereafter."[28]

8. Steadfastness on Truth, Knowledge, Awareness and Certainty

Whoever ponders on the Qur'an regularly, Allāh bestows on him steadfastness on truth, impeccable knowledge, clear insights and certainty.

9. Reflection is a major intellectual strengthener that leads to the awakening of the individual and renaissance of nations.

Contemplation on the Qur'an is the reason many lives changed for the better. Many people who were hitherto slaves and lowly in the society were elevated by their relationship with the Qur'an. The stories of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, Ata bn Abi Rabah and Hassan Al-Basri are worthy examples among the pious predecessors.

Abdullah ibn Masud's journey from a short, tiny, humble shepherd from a lowly background to one of the most

[28] Tahdib Madārij As-Salikeen

respected companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ illustrates the transformative power of the Qur'an. The Prophet ﷺ would direct his Companions to recite the Qur'an way he did. It was narrated from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud that Abu Bakr and 'Umar gave him the glad tidings that the Messenger of Allāh had said: "Whoever would like to recite the Qur'an as fresh as when it was revealed, let him recite it like Ibn Umm 'Abd (Abdullah Bn Mas'ud).'[29]

He also has the rare privilege of reciting the Qur'an to the Prophet ﷺ. 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said to him,

"Recite the Qur'an to me." 'Abdullah said, "Shall I recite (the Qur'an) to you while it has been revealed to you?" He said, "I like to hear it from others."[30]

Ata a Tabi' who was a crippled slave with a hunch back rose to the pinnacle of knowledge and honour by becoming the Mufti of Makkah. He learnt from more than 200 Companions of the Prophet ﷺ and spent his time in the worship of Allāh. He would recite 200 or more āyāt in his Tahajjud salah. No time of his was spent without the remembrance of Allāh. Even his gatherings were not devoid of dhikr. When in a gathering, he would remain silent most of the time, engaged in dhikr. However, when

[29] Sunan Ibn Majah 138 (Graded Sahih)

[30] Sahih Al-Bukhari 569

he spoke, those around felt as if inspiration was descending upon him.

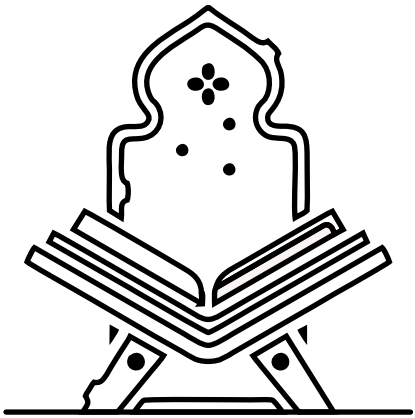
Both parents of Hassan Al-Basri were slaves, but despite his background Hassan would rise to become one of the most prominent figures amongst the second generation of Muslims by virtue of his relationship with the Qur'an and his piety.

Imam Ahmad ibn Hambal (May Allah have mercy upon him) said,

"Allah bestows the treasure of knowledge to one whom He loves. If knowledge would have been kept only for a specific people then those with the noblest lineage would be most deserving of it. However, 'Ata' (ibn Abi Rabah) was an Abyssinian slave, Yazid ibn Habib was a Nubian, and Hassan al Basri and Ibn Sirin were both slaves."[31]

[31] Siyar al Sahabah, vol. 7 pg. 225

Part II



REFLECTIONS

Ahmad Adetola-Kazeem (Abu Muhsin)

REFLECTIONS

ALLAH'S GREATNESS IS BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION

Have you ever pondered on Allah's words in Ayatul Kursiyy:

Allah says:

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ ۖ

"His Kursi (Seat) encompasses the heavens and the earth" (Al-Baqarah: 255)

If Allah's seat is so large that is encompasses the seven heavens and the earth combined, what about His Arsh (Throne) upon which the Seat rests?

These descriptions confound the mind. If these things created by Allah are so great that we can't comprehend their vastness, what about the One who created them?

How great is Allah? We admit Allah's Greatness but His Greatness is beyond human comprehension.

Before reading the Qur'ān and contemplating on its meaning, bring into your consciousness Allah's greatness and the fact that you are about to read the greatest speech ever. When your heart is filled with awe for Allah and His words, His light will engulf your heart and your reflection will become rich and exceedingly beneficial.

LET THE QUR'ĀN TALK TO YOU PERSONALLY

When next you read the Qur'ān, be deliberate about listening to what Allāh is telling you personally.

Below is what I heard when I read verses 51 to 60 of Surah Ghaafir

1) Allāh's help is assured in this life and the hereafter for the messengers and the believers. [Verse 51]

- I felt a huge relief knowing that whatever it is I am facing of trials will be over soon and hoping that Allāh will reward me with the good in this life and a lofty abode in Jannah.

2) The above is a true promise from Allāh but achieving it requires patience, constantly seeking Allāh's forgiveness, glorifying Allāh and thanking him regularly (at least in the mornings and evenings). [Verse 55]

- If I patiently persevere the difficult phase of life and I let my tongue be wet by consistently chanting Istighfar (saying Astagfirullah), Tasbih (saying Subhana lLlahi) and Tahmeed (saying Alhamdulillahi), Allāh will wipe my

tears, raise my ranks, grant me success in this world and admit me to Jannah when I die. I have no doubts whatsoever that all will come to pass by Allāh's grace.

3) We will be raised after we die and have decayed. That is easy for Allāh to do. Afterall we were nothing before He made us something. If Allāh can create the heavens and earth which is more difficult than creation of man, then only the heedless will doubt the day of resurrection. [Verse 57 & 58]

4) Allāh says: "Call upon Me, I will respond to you. Surely those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell, fully humbled." [Verse 60]

- I have to humble myself to Allāh by calling upon him in relief and in distress. If I don't stop calling upon him, He has assured me of acceptance of my supplications. Allāh has promised to humble those whose pride has caused them to be lazy in worship and supplication by placing then in Jahannam.

اللَّهُمَ إِجْعَل القُرْآنَ العَظِيمَ رَبِيعَ قُلُوبِنَا وَنُورَ صُدُورِنَا وَجَلاَءِ أَحْزَانِنَا وَذَهَابَ هُمُومِنَا

O Allāh, make the Qur'an the spring of our hearts, the light of our chests, the (source of) removal of our sorrows and the release of our worries. Aameen.

ASK ALLAH TO MAKE THE QURAN REACH YOUR HEART

Many of us have sins we are ashamed of and we hope Allah never expose to others. We need to make efforts to abandon and repent from those sins before we die so that they don't prevent us from entering Jannah.

We are not alone, some of our pious predecessors committed grave crimes before Allah turned their hearts towards Him. Many of them heard the recitation of a verse of the Quran, it touched their heart and that was the turning point in their lives.

Fudayl bn Iyad who would become a scholar and virtuous figure known for his wisdom, trustworthiness, piety and spirituality was once a highway robber, he was infact the leader of his gang just the way some people engage in Zina, receive and give bribes, embezzle funds in their work places and positions of office, break the ties of kinship, don't use the proper hijab or don't use it at all, listen to music, drink alcohol, shake or touch the opposite sex etc.

Fudayl had traced a lady to a compound, while sitting on the fence surveilling the environment when he heard one

of the occupants reading Suratul Hadid: 16:

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَن تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُواْ كَٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِن قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَٰسِقُونَ

"Has the time not yet come for the believers' hearts to be humbled at the remembrance of Allah and what has been revealed of the truth, and not be like those given the Scripture before— who were spoiled for so long that their hearts became hardened. And many of them are rebellious." (Suratul Hadid, 57:16)

The divine words of Allah reached him deeply and liberated him from the clutches of his desires. The verse struck him. He paused and then climbed down from the walls while repeatedly muttering to himself, as if answering the verse, "certainly my Lord the time has come".

In the famous work on history and biography, Siyar A'lam An-Nubala' (lives of the noble figures) by Imam Adh-Dhahabi, the writer narrated a description about Fudayl Ibn Iyad thus:

"I have witnessed the most knowledgeable, pious and chaste of people; (they are) Waki', Fudayl Ibn Iyad, and Ibn Mubarak."

Fudayl's contemporary, Abdullah Ibn Mubarak, who is also highly regarded by the people of his time and today

to be knowledgeable and trustworthy, testified thus:

"I believe there's no one left alive on the surface of this world who is better than Fudayl Ibn Iyad".

O Allāh the turner of hearts, turn my heart and those of the readers from apparent and hidden sins. O Allāh! Make the Qur'an the spring of our hearts. Raise our rank through the Qur'an and obedience to you.

PARDON THEIR FAULTS, ALLĀH WILL PARDON YOU TOO

The Prophet ﷺ emphasized keeping the ties of kinship on several occasions.

Jubayr ibn Mut'im (may Allāh be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Prophet ﷺ say:

"The one who severs the ties of kinship will not enter Paradise."[32]

Someone may say, "I severed relationship with a member of my family because he hurt me in so and so way or because he distanced himself from me."

Abdullah bin 'Amr Al-'as (May Allāh be pleased with them) reported that the Prophet ﷺ said,

" لَيْسَ الْوَاصِلُ بِالْمُكَافِئِ، وَلَكِنِ الْوَاصِلُ الَّذِي إِذَا قَطَعَتْ رَحِمُهُ وَصَلَهَا "

"A person is not considered to have perfectly maintained the ties of kinship when he gets recompensed by his relatives (for being kind and good to them), but the one who truly maintains the bonds of kinship is the one who

[32] Sahih Muslim-2556

persists in doing so (through kind actions) even though the latter has severed the ties of kinship with him".[33]

Have you vowed never to have anything to do with that cousin of yours?

Have you vowed never to support your brother and his children because of something they did to harm you?

Have you stopped calling or answering the calls of that uncle and aunty of yours?

When Abubakr (May Allāh be pleased with him) vowed to stop supporting and providing for Mistah (his nephew) for his role in the slander of Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her) Allāh revealed in An-Nur:22:

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُوْلُواْ ٱلْفَضْلِ مِنكُمْ وَٱلسَّعَةِ أَن يُؤْتُوٓاْ أُوْلِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينَ وَٱلْمُهَٰجِرِينَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَلْيَعْفُواْ وَلْيَصْفَحُوٓاْ ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَن يَغْفِرَ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allāh, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allāh should forgive you? And Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful."

Pick up that phone and call them now!!

Pay them a visit over the weekend!!

[33] Sahih Bukhari 5991

Send the school fees and pay the hospital bills!!

Go for your next family meeting and functions!!

Pardon their faults, Allāh will pardon yours too.

THE REWARDS ARE NOT THE SAME

The rewards of those who support a cause on the path of Allāh in its teething stage and in the days of little beginnings are not the same as those who supported when the cause had blossomed. Each will be rewarded but the one who supported at the most difficult period when the future of the endeavour was not clear will have more rewards.

Allāh says:

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تُنفِقُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَٰثُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ لَا يَسْتَوِى مِنكُم مَّنْ أَنفَقَ مِن قَبْلِ ٱلْفَتْحِ وَقَٰتَلَ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنفَقُوا۟ مِنۢ بَعْدُ وَقَٰتَلُوا۟ ۚ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

"And why should you not spend in the cause of Allāh, while Allāh is the [sole] inheritor of the heavens and the earth? Those of you who spent [in the Way of Allah] and fought before the victory [over Makkah] are unparalleled. They are far greater in rank than those who spent and fought afterwards. Yet Allāh has promised each a fine reward. And Allāh is All-Aware of what you do." (Al-Hadid: 10)

Look around you, identify a good cause with little or no

support and support it. The only wealth that will benefit us when we die is the one we spent in Allāh's cause.

THE PRESSURE IS REAL AND IT WILL GET WORSE

In the contemporary world, the allure of wealth and fame often entices many and veer them off the righteous path. The stories of individuals who abandon their religious principles for worldly gains are becoming increasingly common. This pressure is amplified by the constant display of affluence by entertainers, influencers, and even those within religious circles who flaunt their material success.

Allah says:

لَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِۦٓ أَزْوَٰجًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَٱخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"Look not with your eyes ambitiously at what We have bestowed on certain classes of them (the disbelievers), nor grieve over them. And lower your wings for the believers (be courteous to the fellow-believers)." (Al-Hijr:88)

This verse advises against envying the material possessions of disbelievers and hypocrites. Instead, it encourages believers to be courteous and supportive

towards one another.

Allah also says:

وَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَٰلُهُمْ وَأَوْلَٰدُهُمْ ۚ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ أَن يُعَذِّبَهُم بِهَا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَٰفِرُونَ

"And let not their wealth and their children impress you. Allāh only intends to punish them through them in this world and that their souls should depart [at death] while they are disbelievers." (At-Tawbah:85)

This verse warns against being impressed by the apparent prosperity of hypocrites. Their wealth and children are a test for them, often leading to their downfall and ultimate regret.

Believers are encouraged to be content with what Allāh has provided them. The allure of wealth and luxury is temporary and deceptive.

Al-Imam as-Sa'di explains in his Tafseer:

"Do not admire them in such a way that you will be distracted with desire for the worldly pleasures enjoyed by those who live in luxury and by which the ignorant are deceived. You should be content with that which Allāh has given you."

The command to "lower the gaze" applies not only to

avoiding inappropriate glances at the opposite sex but also to refraining from envying others' material possessions.

Unfollow pages and delete apps that promote a lifestyle of materialism and luxury if they lead to feelings of inadequacy or envy.

Worldly pleasures and possessions are temporary. Those who focus solely on material wealth will eventually face regret.

As-Sa'di said in his Tafseer:

"Do not be impressed and do not repeatedly admire worldly pleasures and those who are enjoying them... it will all soon end and cease to be, and those who love it will die, then they will regret when regret will be to no avail."

Use any gifts and wealth provided to you by Allāh to support righteous causes and not to compete in worldly displays. In a world that increasingly glorifies material wealth and superficial success, it is crucial for believers to remain steadfast in their faith and principles. The allure of worldly possessions is a test, and true success lies in contentment with what Allāh has provided and using one's resources to support righteous causes.

May Allāh grant us Halal provisions, protect us from the

trials of wealth and fame, and keep our hearts firm in His worship.

ALLAH'S GREATNESS IS BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION

It is easier for a disbeliever to repent and be a believer than for a hypocrite to repent. This is evident in Islamic history. We can count on the tip of our fingers numerous staunch disbelievers who became among the leading Sahaabah, same cannot be said about the leading hypocrites.

Let us ponder on two verses in Surah Al-Baqarah where Allāh described the disbelievers and the hypocrites.

In describing the disbelievers in verse 171, Allāh says:

صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

"They are deaf, dumb and blind so they do not understand."

In describing the Hypocrites in verse 18 Allāh says:

صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ

They are deaf, dumb and blind so they will never return (to the right path).

A close look at the two verses will show that the

description of the hypocrites is more severe. Just as the description, so also is their final abode. The hypocrites will be in lowest depth of the Fire- (An-Nisaa:145). Deeper and hotter than the station of the disbelievers in hell.

In explaining verse 18 of Suratul Baqarah the Mufaasirun say the reason for this is that they don't use their eye, mouth and ears for what they are created for. They are deaf to truth, good and guidance just as if they can't hear. They are dumb from speaking the truth, just as if they can't talk. They are blind from seeing the truth and they lack insight of the light of guidance, just as if they can't see.

They won't be able to return from their misguidance and their hypocrisy to the true Islam because they left the truth after Allāh had made them aware of it. The one who left the truth because of ignorance and misguidance has a higher chance of returning than the former.

اللّهم إِنّي أَعُوذ بِكَ مِنْ، الشقَاقِ، وَالنِّفَاقِ وَسُوءِ الأَخْلاَقِ

O Allāh, I seek refuge with You from opposing the truth, hypocrisy and bad manners.

FIVE PRINCIPLES OF WEALTH

These principles must be considered for anyone who hopes to attain success in both worlds.

The principles are as contained in Surah Al-Qasas :76-77. Allāh says:

لَا تَفْرَحْ

"Don't be Prideful (Exultant)!!"

When you are prideful, arrogant or overtly ecstatic because of what you have been bestowed of wealth you are bound to forget it is Allāh's doing, you forget to thank Him and be appreciative. You forget to give charity and think your riches are solely your own making. Allāh hates the prideful!!

وَٱبْتَغِ فِيمَآ ءَاتَىٰكَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلدَّارَ ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةَ

"Seek the [reward] of the Hereafter by means of what Allāh has granted you"

Use what has been given to you of wealth to gain the pleasure of Allāh and the rewards of the hereafter by spending in the cause of Allāh and on those in need.

Place your wealth in your hand and not in your heart. Let your heart be attached to Allāh and the life of the hereafter. Plant in this world (by spending) and reap the fruits (Jannah) in the hereafter.

وَلَا تَنسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ ٱلدُّنْيَا

"Don't forget your share of this world"

Take your share of the world through lawful means without being wasteful. Enjoy your life without destroying your hereafter. Enjoy in a halal way, don't be lavish. Your Lord, your body, your family, all have rights over you. Give each its rights.

وَأَحْسِن كَمَآ أَحْسَنَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ

"And be good [to others] as Allāh has been good to you."
Out of many, Allāh made you rich. Spend on those who are not as blessed. Be good to them by not being arrogant, by not trampling on them and their rights. Relate with them with goodness. Be good to the one who gave you the wealth (Allāh) by obeying His command, thanking Him often and being upright in all your affairs.

وَلَا تَبْغِ ٱلْفَسَادَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ

"Do not seek to spread corruption in the land"

Don't be a tyrant over those below your status or placed under your control. Don't be arrogant. Don't engage in

sins with what Allāh has given you of His favours. Allāhdoes not like the corrupt sinner.

THE TRUE SERVANTS OF ALLĀH

In Surah Al-Furqan, Allāh describes the attributes of His true servants, those who are beloved to Him and strive to embody His teachings. Here are the 13 attributes mentioned, along with their corresponding verses:

وَعِبَادُ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَمۡشُونَ عَلَى ٱلۡأَرۡضِ هَوۡنٗا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ ٱلۡجَٰهِلُونَ قَالُواْ سَلَٰمٗا

"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace." (Al-Furqan:63)

1. They relate with Allāh and His creatures with humility.

2. They are patient and forbearing in the face of verbal attacks from the ignorant and the mischievous.

وَٱلَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمۡ سُجَّدٗا وَقِيَٰمٗا

"And those who spend [part of] the night to their Lord prostrating and standing [in prayer]." (Al-Furqan:64)

3. They stand and bow in prayers to their Lord for a good portion of the night when others are fast asleep.

3. They stand and bow in prayers to their Lord for a good portion of the night when others are fast asleep.

وَٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ٱصۡرِفۡ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَۖ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا. إِنَّهَا سَآءَتۡ مُسۡتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا

"And those who say, 'Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of Hell. Indeed, its punishment is ever adhering; indeed, it is evil as a settlement and residence.'" (Al-Furqan:65-66)

4. They fear entering the fire on Judgment Day and they supplicate to Allāh to protect them from its punishment.

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَآ أَنفَقُواْ لَمۡ يُسۡرِفُواْ وَلَمۡ يَقۡتُرُواْ وَكَانَ بَيۡنَ ذَٰلِكَ قَوَامًا

"And those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate." (Al-Furqan:67)

5. They are moderate in spending; they are not lavish or stingy.

وَٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَدۡعُونَ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَٰهًا ءَاخَرَ وَلَا يَقۡتُلُونَ ٱلنَّفۡسَ ٱلَّتِي حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَّا بِٱلۡحَقِّ وَلَا يَزۡنُونَۚ وَمَن يَفۡعَلۡ ذَٰلِكَ يَلۡقَ أَثَامًا

"And those who do not invoke with Allāh another deity or kill the soul which Allāh has forbidden [to be killed], except by right, and do not commit unlawful sexual

intercourse. And whoever should do that will meet a penalty." (Al-Furqan:68 -69)

6. They protect their religion by not engaging in idolatry practices or anything remotely connected to it.

7. They are passionate about preserving lives by not killing others unlawfully.

8. They are passionate about preserving the sanctity of lineages by staying away from fornication and adultery.

وَٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ ٱلزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّواْ بِٱللَّغْوِ مَرُّواْ كِرَامًا

"And [they are] those who do not testify to falsehood, and when they pass near ill speech, they pass by with dignity." (Al-Furqan:72)

9. They don't witness falsehood and indecencies.

10. They avoid people who engage in indecencies and places where indecencies take place to preserve their honor.

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُواْ بِـَٔايَـٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّواْ عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا

"And those who, when reminded of the verses of their Lord, do not fall upon them deaf and blind." (Al-Furqan:73)

11. They have a cordial relationship with the Qur'ān through reading, listening, pondering, and acting upon its dictates.

وَٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَٰجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّٰتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَٱجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

"And those who say, 'Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous.'" (Al-Furqan:74)

12. They are intentional about asking Allāh for righteous spouses and offspring.

13. They strive to be worthy role models for the pious believers through their supplications and actions.

- Evaluate yourself against these attributes to see how many of these characteristics you possess. Strive to improve in areas where you fall short.

- Regularly ask Allāh to help you adopt these attributes and to make it easy for you to imbibe them in your daily life.

- Make a conscious effort to apply these characteristics in your interactions with others and in your relationship with Allāh.

May Allāh make these lofty characteristics easy for us to imbibe.

IT ISN'T OVER, JUST BELIEVE

Have you ever thought for once that the best of us - Rasulullah ﷺ had it rough for a significant part of his life. His trials were also multifaceted that each one of us could easily match our trials to the ones faced by the best man ever created by Allāh.

Let's reflect on the following verses of Suratul Duha

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ، وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ، وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ

"Your Lord has neither abandoned you nor does He hate you. The life of the hereafter is much better than your current life. And [surely] your Lord will give so much to you that you will be pleased."

This verse were revealed when there was a long period during which the Prophet did not receive any revelation and the Kufaar of Makkah mocked him saying His Lord had forsaken Him.

Know that your Lord has not forsaken you and He does not hate you. He will replace your sorrow with something better and you will be pleased In Sha Allāh.

See yourself as a general in the army and your trials as the

war you are encountering. When you successfully prosecute the war, you get medals and promotion. Likewise, when you patiently bear your trials, Allāh increases your rank and status with him and in the sight of the people.

Allāh's Messenger said:

مَنْ يُرِدُ اللهُ بِهِ خَيرًا، يُصِبْ بِهِ

"Whoever Allāh intends good for, He afflicts him with trials."[34]

May Allāh grant solace to everyone patiently bearing their trials.

[34] Sahih Bukhari 5645

WHEN YOU FORGET ALLĀH, YOU FORGET YOURSELF!!!

There is big possibility that you must have come across the verse below and there is a bigger possibility you have never pondered on it.

Allāh says in Suratul Hashr V. 19:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا۟ كَٱلَّذِينَ نَسُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ فَأَنسَىٰهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۚ

"Do not be like those who forgot Allāh, so He caused them to forget themselves. It is they who are the evildoers."

Shaykh AbdurRahman bn Nasir as-Sa'di in his explanation of the verse said:

"The ultimate deprivation is for a person to pay no attention to this matter and to behave like people who forgot Allāh, were heedless about remembering Him and fulfilling their duties towards Him and focused on their own inclinations, whims and desires, and therefore they did not prosper or attain any good. Rather Allāh caused them to forget that which was in their best interests, and He caused them to fail to notice that which was good for them and was of benefit to them. Thus, they ended up in

ruin and disarray, and became losers in both realms; their loss was so great that it could not be made up, because they were the evildoers who drifted away from obedience to their Lord and persisted in disobeying Him."

Turn back to Allāh, if you remember Him, you remember yourself!!!

MAY WE NOT BECOME SLAVES TO OUR CHILDREN

The Prophet ﷺ said one of the signs of the last day is that "the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress (Boss)."[35]

Many parents are worth nothing in the sight of their children and have become slaves who are tossed around by their children. They are at the beck and call of their children who do not show them mercy or empathize with them at any given time. One of the leading causes of this is the urge of parents to have children take care of their financial needs even before they become adults. Another cause is the failure to discipline

The Prophet ﷺ taught us a supplication to protect us from this trial and other similar trials.

اللّٰهُمَ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ جَارِ السُوءِ، وَمِنْ زَوجٍ تُشَيِّبُنِي قَبْلَ المَشيبِ، وَمِنْ وَلَدٍ يَكُون عَلَيَّ رَبًّا، وَمِنْ مَالٍ يَكُون عَلَيَّ عَذَابًا، وَمِنْ خَلِيلٍ مَاكِرٍ عَينُه تَرَانِي، وَقَلْبُهُ يَرعَانِي؛ إِن رَأَى سَيئَةً أَذَاعَهَا

"O Allāh, I seek Your protection from an evil neighbour; from a spouse who will age me ahead of time; from a child who will rule over me; from wealth that will become a punishment for me; from a cunning friend whose eyes

[35] Sahih Muslim. Hadith 2 of An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith

see me yet his heart keeps guard over me: if he sees any good, he conceals it and if he sees any bad, he announces it.”[36]

Allāh's aid is sought!!

[36] At-Tabarani (1339) Graded Sahih by Shaykh Al-Albany

DEBT IS A BURDEN

The Prophet ﷺ often seeks Allāh's protection from being overwhelmed with debt, from overpowering by the enemy and being an object of mockery to the enemy.

He will say اللَّهمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ غَلَبَةِ الدَّينِ،وَغَلَبَةِ العَدّو، وَشَمَاتَةِ الأَعْدَاءِ

In another narration he will seek refuge from being overwhelmed by debts and being overpowered by men.

He will say أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ غَلَبَةِ الدَيْنِ، وَقَهْرِ الرِّجَلِ

Debt, overpowering and mockery by the enemy are related. We are very vulnerable when we have huge and embarrassing debts hanging around our necks. It will push us to sometimes seek the assistance of our enemies and we become a laughing stock to those who love to see us fail.

It was narrated from 'Aa'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) that the Prophet ﷺ used to say in his prayer:

"Allāhumma inni a'oodhi bika min al-ma'tham wa'l-maghram (O Allāh, I seek refuge with You from sin and heavy debt)." Someone said to him: "How often you seek

refuge from heavy debt!" He said: "When a man gets into debt, he speaks and tells lies, and he makes a promise and breaks it." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (832) and Muslim (589).

Al-Qurtubi wrote:[37]

"Our scholars said: It is a disgrace and a humiliation because it preoccupies the mind and makes one worried about paying it off and makes one feel humiliated before the lender when meeting him, and feeling that he is doing one a favour when accepting a delay in payment. Perhaps he may promise himself that he will pay it off then break that promise, or speak to the lender and lie to him, or swear an oath to him then break it, and so on. Moreover, he may die without having paid off the debt so he will be held hostage because of it, as the Prophet ﷺ said: "The soul of the believer is held hostage by his debt in his grave until it is paid off."" [38]

All of that undermines one's religious commitment.

Oh Allāh, make it easy for us to pay our debts and save us from humiliation in this world and the hereafter.

[37] Al-Jaami' li Ahkam al-Qur'ān 3/417

[38] At-Tirmidhi, 1078.

DON'T ABANDON ALLĀH'S WORK BECAUSE OF TRIALS

I came across a verse of the Qur'ān a while ago and I initially thought it will be good to share the lessons as an encouragement for all of us to be patient.

A closer look at the verse and my consultation of books of Tafsir indicated that the verse may be more appropriate to scholars, students of knowledge, preachers and those who engage in active Da'wah activities. On a further look, I saw that Allāh may be calling my attention in view of some personal experiences.

Allāh says,

فَٱصۡبِرۡ لِحُكۡمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُن كَصَاحِبِ ٱلۡحُوتِ

"So, wait with patience for the decision of your Lord and be not like the Companion of the Fish." (Al-Qalam: 48)

The Companion of the fish, Yunus Bn Matta, the Prophet (May the Peace and Blessings of Allah be Upon Him) who left his people angrily, impatiently and prematurely because of their repulsive conduct and a looming destruction.

This verse was directed at the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allâh be upon him) to encourage him to be patient in the face of the harms directed at him by the disbelievers with the assurances that he will triumph.

As callers to truth, we will encounter challenges that may want to veer us off the noble cause, this verse encourages us to be patient.

Imam Muhammad Ibn AbdulWahab said there are four things we need to know and pay attention to: Knowledge, acting upon the Knowledge, calling to the knowledge and Patience upon the harms encountered along the way. [39]

May Allāh grant us patience, relief and success.

[39] Al-Usool-uth Thalaatha

COMPANIONSHIP OF THE POOR AND WEAK

The Prophet ﷺ at the onset of his da'wah was joined by the poor and weak and they will sit near him to listen to the message. The Prophet ﷺ thought that if the powerful and rich accept Islam it will aid the Dawah and ensure its rapid growth. The powerful on their part hate to be seen intermingling with the poor and weak, they feel it will diminish their status, so they asked the Prophet ﷺ to get rid of them if he wants them (the high and mighty) to follow him. The Prophet ﷺ was about considering their request when Allāh revealed Suratu Al-An'am v 52:

وَلَا تَطۡرُدِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدۡعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِٱلۡغَدَوٰةِ وَٱلۡعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجۡهَهُۥۖ مَا عَلَيۡكَ مِنۡ حِسَابِهِم مِّن شَيۡءٖ وَمَا مِنۡ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيۡهِم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَتَطۡرُدَهُمۡ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ

"And do not send away those who call upon their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His face [i.e., favor]. Not upon you is anything of their account and not upon them is anything of your account. So were you to send them away, you would [then] be of the wrongdoers."

They are many lessons in this verse, and I will be sharing some hoping that it impacts us all greatly.

1. This verse is an indication that the Qur'ān is Allāh's word, were it to be that of the Prophet ﷺ or someone else, the Prophet ﷺ wouldn't have been warned in this manner.

2. No one is free from making mistakes. If you are a scholar, leader or whatever you may be, admit you will make mistakes sometimes and be willing to openly admit and correct your mistakes.

3. Scholars, Students of Knowledge and Callers must be very wary of hobnobbing with the high and powerful. Many of the Salaf warn against it because of its propensity to derail the people of knowledge.

Ibn Al-Jawzi said, "It is from the devil's deception of scholars to make them intermingle with rulers and sultans. They look away from their faults and never admonish them in spite of their ability to do so. Some of them might even give fatwas allowing them to do things just for worldly gain."[40]

Sufyan al-Thawri used to say: "I am not worried about them (the ruler) insulting me. I worry about them acting generously towards me, so my heart becomes softer towards them."[41]

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[40] Al-Hafiz Jamal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Jawzi, تلبيس ابليس (The Devil's Deceptions), pp. 709

[41] Supra

4. Allāh raises the rank of people irrespective of their economic or social status. O Muslim, don't despair if you are poor or weak. Focus on pleasing your Lord and He will raise your rank. Those seated with the Prophet ﷺ on this occasion were Sa'ad Bn Abi Waqqas, Abdullah Bn Mas'ud, Bilal bn Rabah, 'Ammar bn Yasir, Miqdad bn Amr and Khabaab bn Harat. Many of them were happy knowing that Allāh spoke loftily about them not just to the Prophet ﷺ but to all of us and it will be read in the Qur'ān till the end of time. Allāh eventually used them to strengthen, spread and preserve the Deen.

5. Allāh tells us about the lofty status of those who remember Allāh and the importance of being in their company. May Allāh make us amongst those who remember Allāh and are always in the company of the righteous.

YOU DIDN'T CHOOSE GUIDANCE, ALLAH GUIDED YOU

When people see those who have deficiencies in their religious practices, the default reaction is to scorn, mock, abuse or curse them. This should not be the case. We should rather pity and pray that Allah guides them, because no one can be guided except by Allah. And as mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ our souls are in between two fingers of Allah and He turns it either to the path of guidance or misguidance. [42]

Allah says:

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ مَا زَكَىٰ مِنكُم مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُزَكِّى مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"Had it not been for Allah's grace and mercy upon you, none of you would have ever been purified. But Allah purifies whoever He wills. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing." (An-Nur: 21)

What is most intriguing is that many who scorn others were once like those they scorn.

Allah says:

[42] Sahih Muslim 2655

Allah says:

كَذَٰلِكَ كُنتُم مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ

“You were initially like them then Allah blessed you [with Islam]”(An Nisa' : 94)

Warn don't scorn.

Pray for them don't curse them.

Pity them don't mock them.

You didn't choose guidance, Allah guided you

Stay humble, no one knows what the future holds.

O PEOPLE OF KNOWLEDGE, IT IS NOT BEFITTING THAT YOU BECOME JESTERS OR 'CRUISE CATCHERS'

It is very awkward seeing knowledgeable persons who have become grounded in one or more fields of Islamic knowledge joking around, sharing contents not befitting of a person of knowledge, and mocking others at the slightest provocation or with no provocation at all.

I once listened to the explanation by Shaykh AbdurRazaaq Ibn Abdul-Muhsin Al-Badr of Shaykh Saadi's Taysirul Kareem fii Tafsiri Kalamul Manaan and something profound struck me from the explanation of verse 67 of Suratul Baqarah.

He said, "When Prophet Musa عليه الصـــلاة والســـلام told his people Allah had ordered them to slaughter a cow and hit the dead with it in order to reveal the killer of a particular man, they said:

أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا

"Are you making fun of us'"?

Prophet Musa responded:

أَعُوذُ بِاللهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الجَـهِلِينَ

“I seek refuge in Allah in being among the ignorant.”

The scholars of Tafsir extracted a very profound lesson for the benefit of discerning scholars and student of knowledge in this exchange between Musa and his people.

They say in summary:

“It is the ignorant one that says things that are of no benefit, and makes jest of and mock the people, in the case of the wise, he sees such actions as grave as of the greatest flaws”.

We ask Allah's protection from actions that will demean us and demean the beneficial knowledge we possess.

DO YOU EXCHANGE WHAT IS BETTER FOR WHAT IS WORSE?

The nature of man is to want the best for himself, yet ironically, many people settle for less, and in worse cases, they settle for destruction and doom. With thousands of religions on earth, it is surprising that most people abandon the only religion accepted by Allāh—Islam—for other religions that shall be rejected. Allāh says in Surah Aal Imran (3:19):

إِنَّ ٱلدِّينَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمُ ۗ

"Indeed, the (only) religion in the sight of Allāh is Islām."

Of the few who claim to be Muslims, only those who follow the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ will be successful. The overwhelming majority will be doomed. This reality highlights a stark paradox in human nature and choices.

It is even more surprising that among those who follow the Qur'ān and Sunnah, many are heedless, engaging in activities that neither profit them in this world nor in the Hereafter, such as gossiping, slander, backbiting, envy, and not lowering the gaze etc. These distractions divert

their focus from the path of righteousness.

Among the remaining number, there is a group that oscillates between obedience and disobedience. They struggle to keep their soul on the path of goodness, reflecting the inner conflict many face in adhering strictly to Islamic principles.

The final group is those who strive towards obedience consistently. These individuals understand the value of unwavering dedication to Allāh's commands and seek His pleasure in all their actions.

Allāh explains the levels of obedience in Surah Fatir (35:32):

ثُمَّ أَوۡرَثۡنَا ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱصۡطَفَيۡنَا مِنۡ عِبَادِنَاۖ فَمِنۡهُمۡ ظَالِمٞ لِّنَفۡسِهِۦ وَمِنۡهُم مُّقۡتَصِدٞ وَمِنۡهُمۡ سَابِقُۢ بِٱلۡخَيۡرَٰتِ بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ ٱلۡفَضۡلُ ٱلۡكَبِيرُ

"Then We granted the Book to those We have chosen from Our servants. Some of them wrong themselves, some follow a middle course, and some are foremost in good deeds by Allāh's Will. That is [ruly] the greatest bounty."

In this verse, Allāh categorizes Muslims into three groups:

1. Those Who Wrong Themselves (Sinners): These are Muslims whose evil actions outweigh their righteous

actions.

2. Those Who Follow a Middle Course: These individuals have a balance of good and bad deeds, with their righteous actions slightly outweighing their sins. They are midway between those who wrong themselves and those who are foremost in good deeds.

3. Those Who Are Foremost in Good Deeds (Righteous): These are Muslims who hasten to perform righteous actions. They diligently engage in compulsory acts of worship as well as supererogatory acts, and they avoid forbidden actions.

Any sensible person will aim for the highest level, hoping to achieve it or at least come close. One should not aim for something low, with the risk of losing it all.

Allāh says:

أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ ٱلَّذِى هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِٱلَّذِى هُوَ خَيْرٌ ۚ

"Do you exchange what is better for what is worse?" (Al-Baqarah: 61)

Ambition is crucial, for he who aims at the sky will certainly go higher than he who aims at a tree.

Do not be like those described in Surah Al-Mu'minun:99-100:

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَ أَحَدَهُمُ ٱلۡمَوۡتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ٱرۡجِعُونِ (٩٩) لَعَلِّيٓ أَعۡمَلُ صَٰلِحٗا فِيمَا تَرَكۡتُۚ كَلَّآۚ إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَآئِلُهَاۖ وَمِن وَرَآئِهِم بَرۡزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوۡمِ يُبۡعَثُونَ (١٠٠)

"When death approaches any of them, they cry, 'My Lord! Let me go back so I may do good in what I left behind.' Never! It is only a [useless] appeal they make. And there is a barrier behind them until the Day they are resurrected."

This verse serves as a poignant reminder of the regrets people face at the time of death, wishing they could return to rectify their deeds. The time to strive for righteousness is now, not at the moment of death when it is too late.

May Allāh make righteous actions easy for us and guide us to the path of those who are foremost in good deeds.

HOW DO YOU REACT TO ALLĀH'S FAVOR UPON YOU?

When Allāh favored and granted kingship, wealth, and the ability to communicate with jinn and animals to Nabiyy Sulayman (May the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), he responded with humility and gratitude. He said:

هَٰذَا مِن فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي ءَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ

"This is from the favor of my Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful." [An-Naml 27:40]

Sulayman did not attribute his success to his own wisdom, power, or nobility. Instead, he acknowledged that everything was made possible by Allāh. His response serves as an exemplary model of recognizing Allāh's favor and viewing it as a test of gratitude.

In stark contrast, Qarun, who was also granted wealth and power, responded with arrogance and self-conceit. When his people admonished him not to be exultant, arrogant, and tyrannical because of the favors he had been granted, he said:

إِنَّمَآ أُوتِيتُهُۥ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِندِىٓ

"I have been granted all these because of the knowledge I have." [Al-Qasas: 78]

Qarun perceived his wealth and influence as the result of his own efforts and believed he deserved it. This starkly contrasts with Sulayman's humility and recognition of Allāh's role in his success.

Reflect on how you view the favours Allāh has granted you, such as wealth, children, position, influence, good health, knowledge, and wisdom. Do you attribute these blessings to your own power and efforts, or do you see them as favors from Allāh?

Allāh punished Qarun by causing the earth to swallow him because of his arrogance and pride. This serves as a warning to us all. May we not be destroyed in this world and the hereafter due to ingratitude and arrogance.

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ ۖ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ

"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more. But if you are ungrateful, surely My punishment is severe.'" [Ibrahim:7]

These verses remind us of the importance of gratitude. When we acknowledge Allāh's favors with gratitude, He promises to increase them. Conversely, if we are

ungrateful, we are warned of severe punishment. This principle underscores the importance of humility and gratitude in our daily lives, recognizing that all we have is by Allāh's favor and mercy.

YOU WON'T ALWAYS BE VICTORIOUS

That you are upon the truth is not a guarantee that you will always triumph against your enemies. You will win some and you will lose others.

After the Muslims suffered a devastating loss at the battle of Uhud and they were dejected, Allāh consoled them thus:

إِن يَمْسَسْكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ ٱلْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِّثْلُهُۥ ۚ وَتِلْكَ ٱلْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنكُمْ شُهَدَآءَ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ

If you have suffered injuries (at Uhud), they suffered similarly (at Badr). We alternate these days (of victory and defeat) among people so that Allāh may reveal the (true) believers, choose martyrs from among you—and Allāh does not like the wrongdoers. [Aal Imran: 140]

Through the victory of your enemies over you, Allāh:-

- Humbles you.
- Makes you continuously place reliance on him all the time upon the realization that nothing is guaranteed.

- Determines those who truly believe (through their patience).

Do not let the temporary defeat of your enemy hold you down. the ultimate victory lies with Allāh and he will grant the patient ones eventually.

Allāh says:

وَلَا تَهِنُوا۟ وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا۟ وَأَنتُمُ ٱلْأَعْلَوْنَ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

Do not lose heart (become weak) or grieve, you will have the upper hand, if you are true believers. [Aal Imran: 139]

Whatever it is you may be facing of defeat or mockery from your enemies is not unique to you, the Prophets and the righteous predecessors have faced similar or even worse.

Allāh says:

وَلَا تَهِنُوا۟ وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا۟ وَأَنتُمُ ٱلْأَعْلَوْنَ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

Similar situations [as yours] have passed on before you, so proceed throughout the earth and observe how was the end of those who denied. [Aal Imran: 137]

هَٰذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is a clear statement to [all] the people and a guidance and instruction for those conscious of Allāh. [Aal Imran: 138]

10 QUALITIES THAT GUARANTEES DIVINE FORGIVENESS AND GREAT REWARDS

If you want Allāh to forgive you and you want a great reward which no eyes have seen, no ear has heard and no human heart can ever think of, then be the following:

1. **Be a MUSLIM** who follows Allāh's command and avoids His prohibitions.

2. **Be a BELIEVER** who believes in Allāh, the Angels, the divinely revealed books, the messengers, the last day and in predestination whether good or bad.

3. **Be an OBEDIENT SERVANT OF ALLĀH** who follows Allāh and His prophet's guidance in secret and in the open with fear, reverence and humility.

4. **Be a TRUTHFUL PERSON** in all your speeches, actions, intentions and belief.

5. **Be a PATIENT PERSON** in obeying Allāh's command, in abandoning prohibited actions and evil desires. Be patient with the trials and tribulations you may be facing.

6. **Be a HUMBLE SERVANT OF ALLĀH.** Humble yourself with utmost concentration when you pray to Him, avoid sins, be good in your speeches and actions to other servants of Allāh.

7. **Be a GENEROUS PERSON.** Spend generously on both obligatory and supererogatory matters of the Deen. Give from your wealth to the poor and the needy by paying Zakat and giving Sadaqah.

8. **Be a PERSON WHO FASTS REGULARLY.** This includes the compulsory fast in Ramadan and voluntary fasts. Fasting is the Zakat of the body; it cleans it and purifies. The best of fast is fasting on alternate days (Fast of Nabiyy Dawud) If you can't do this, fast on Mondays and Thursdays as well as other recommended fasts by the Prophet ﷺ.

9. **Be a CHASTE PERSON.** Protect yourself from Zina (Adultery and Fornication) and things that may lead to it (e.g. Pornography, touching the opposite sex, hugging, kissing, listening to music etc.) don't expose your body, don't engage in homosexuality, lesbianism and don't masturbate.

10. **Be a PERSON WHO REMEMBERS ALLĀH OFTEN.** The one who remembers Allāh in the mornings and evenings with his heart, his tongue, standing, sitting, resting, in secret or in the open and in every position.

Remember Allāh with the recommended supplications of the Prophet ﷺ after every Solat, and those recommended by Him in the morning and evening.

Allāh says:

إِنَّ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ وَٱلْمُسْلِمَٰتِ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ وَٱلْقَٰنِتِينَ وَٱلْقَٰنِتَٰتِ وَٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ وَٱلصَّٰدِقَٰتِ وَٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ وَٱلصَّٰبِرَٰتِ وَٱلْخَٰشِعِينَ وَٱلْخَٰشِعَٰتِ وَٱلْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَٱلْمُتَصَدِّقَٰتِ وَٱلصَّٰٓئِمِينَ وَٱلصَّٰٓئِمَٰتِ وَٱلْحَٰفِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَٱلْحَٰفِظَٰتِ وَٱلذَّٰكِرِينَ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَٱلذَّٰكِرَٰتِ أَعَدَّ ٱللَّهُ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

"Surely [for] Muslim men and women, believing men and women, devout men and women, truthful men and women, patient men and women, humble men and women, charitable men and women, fasting men and women, men and women who guard their chastity, and men and women who remember Allāh often—for[all of] them Allāh has prepared forgiveness and a great reward." (Al-Ahzab:35)

BE HUMBLE, BE SCARED AND REMEMBER DEATH AT ALL TIMES

No one knows what will become of him tomorrow.

- Will he be rich?
- Will he be poor?
- Will he remain a believer?
- Will he become a disbeliever?
- Will he enter Jannah?
- Will he enter Jahannam?

Allāh says:

وَمَا تَدْرِى نَفْسٌۢ بِأَىِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ ۚ

"No Soul knows what it will earn tomorrow." [Luqman:34]

BE SCARED

No one knows where (and how) he will die

- Will it be in the sky?

- Will it be in the ocean or river?
- Will it be at home, in the hospital or on a Journey?
- Will it be in his country of birth or in a foreign land?
- Will it be in an accident or on a sickness?
- Will it be in a war or a fight?
- Will it be in a sleep?
- Will death come in days, months or years?

Allāh says:

وَمَا تَدْرِى نَفْسٌۢ بِأَىِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

"And no Soul knows in what land it will die. Indeed Allāh is All-Knowing Aware." [Luqman:34]

The life of this world is nothing but temporary enjoyment. The life of the hereafter is better and more lasting.

REMEMBER DEATH ALL TIMES

The Prophet ﷺ said:

قَالَ: "هُمْ أَكْثَرُ لِلْمَوتِ ذِكْرًا وَأَحْسَنُهُمْ لَمَا بَعْدَهُ اسْتِعْدَادً أُولَئِكَ الأَكْيَاسُ"

"The one who remembers death the most and is best in

preparing for it is the wisest."[43]

O Allāh we ask you for a good end.

DO YOU WANT ALLĀH TO FORGIVE YOU, RAISE YOUR STATUS AND ADMIT YOU TO JANNAH? THEN DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Hasten towards seeking forgiveness from Allāh.
2. Give charity in times of ease and difficulty.
3. Restrain your anger and pardon those who offend you.
4. When you commit indecencies and wrong your soul, do a lot of dhikr (remembrance of Allāh) and seek forgiveness for your sins.
5. Do not knowingly persist in your sins.

If you do the above, Allāh has assured you of forgiveness and a lofty abode in Jannah where you will dwell forever. Indeed, excellent is the reward of the righteous. (See Surah Aal Imrān: 133-136).

قَالَ الرَّسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم:
"مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ"

Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "Wealth does not diminish

by giving Sadaqah (charity). Allāh increases the honor of him who forgives and no one will humble himself for Allāh's sake except that Allāh raises his status."[44]

[44] Muslim 2588

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE OF THE QUR'AN ?

Many are under the erroneous belief that only the memorizers of the Qur'an are people of the Qur'an. Whilst there is no gainsaying the fact that memorizing the Qur'an has a lot of virtue and every one of us should strive to achieve it, memorizing alone is not enough to make you a person of the Qur'an.

The one who does not memorize much but understands the Qur'an and acts according to it is better than the one who memorizes it but does not understand its message or act by it.

The Messenger of Allah said:

يُؤْتَى بِالقُرْآنِ يَوْمَ القِيَامَةِ وَأَهْلِهِ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ بِهِ تَقْدُمُهُ سُورَةُ البَقَرَةِ وَآلُ عِمْرَانَ. وَضَرَبَ لَهُمَا رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَى اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَسَلَم ثَلاَثَةَ أَمْثَالٍ مَا نَسِيتُهُنَّ بَعدُ قَالَ كَأَنَّهُمَا غَمَامَتَانِ أَوْ ظُلَّتَانِ سَوْدَاوَانِ بَيْنَهُمَا شَرْقٌ أَوْ كَأَنَّهُمَا حِزْقَانِ مِنْ طَيْرٍ صَوَافَّ تُحَاجَّانِ عَنْ صَاحِبِهِمَا

"On the Day of Resurrection, the Qur'an and (its people) those who acted according to it will be brought with Surah al-Baqara and AI 'Imran preceding them. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) likened them to three things, which I did not forget afterwards. He (the Prophet)

which I did not forget afterwards. He (the Prophet) likened them to two clouds, or two black canopies with light between them, or like two flocks of birds in ranks pleading for one who recited them." [45]

The Messenger of Allah described the people of the Qur'an as those who act acording to it.

Ibn Al-Qayyim said:

"The people of the Qur'an are those who are knowledgeable about it, act by its dictates even if they didn't memorize, for the one who memorizes it but does not understand and act by it dictates he is not one of its people even if he keeps its letters as straight as an arrow (i.e. if he is able to recite from memory without error)." [46]

Shaykh Al-Albany said:

"There are no people of Allah except people of the Qur'an, those who stand in prayers (at night) reciting it and acting by its dictates."[47]

Shaykh Salih Al-Fawzaan said:

"Everyone who acts by the Quran is among the people of the Quran whether he memorizes it or not, for the one

[45] Sahih Muslim 805

[46] Zaadul Ma'ad 1/338

[47] Ad-Da'eefah 1/105

who memorizes it it and does not act with it he is not among the people of the Qur'an."[45]

اللَّهُمَ اجْعَلَنَا مِن أَهْلِ القُرْآنَ

O Allāh make us among the people of the Qur'an.

IF YOU THINK DEEPLY YOU WILL BE GRATEFUL

Irrespective of the chaos you may be facing now, a deeper look at your past and what Allah has in store for you should make you grateful.

Allah loves a grateful servant, He loves the one who praises Him, who appreciates His mercy and the one who constantly seeks His forgiveness.

Our lives' stories will not always be smooth but a deeper reflection should make us grateful. Allah reminded Musa of His favours on him despite the ups and downs.

After Allah granted Musa the request of eloquent speech, ease in affairs and a worthy assistant in his brother Harun, Allah reminded him of the other favours in the middle of several chaos:

Allah responded:

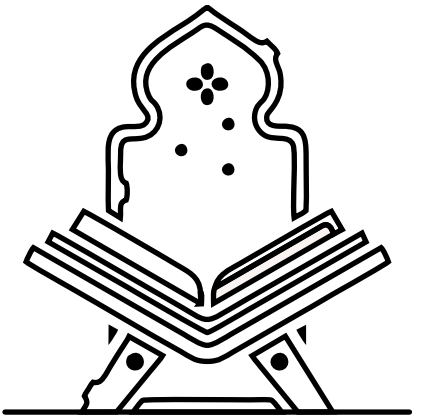
قَالَ قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَـٰمُوسَىٰ ٣٦ وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَىٰٓ ٣٧ إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ
أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَىٰٓ أَنِ ٱقْذِفِيهِ فِى ٱلتَّابُوتِ فَٱقْذِفِيهِ فِى ٱلْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ ٱلْيَمُّ بِٱلسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ
عَدُوٌّ لِّى وَعَدُوٌّ لَّهُۥ ۚ وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّى وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلَىٰ عَيْنِىٓ ٣٨ إِذْ تَمْشِىٓ أُخْتُكَ
فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن يَكْفُلُهُۥ ۖ فَرَجَعْنَـٰكَ إِلَىٰٓ أُمِّكَ كَىْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ ۚ وَقَتَلْتَ
نَفْسًا فَنَجَّيْنَـٰكَ مِنَ ٱلْغَمِّ وَفَتَنَّـٰكَ فُتُونًا ۚ فَلَبِثْتَ سِنِينَ فِىٓ أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ ثُمَّ جِئْتَ عَلَىٰ قَدَرٍ

يَٰمُوسَىٰ ٤٠ وَٱصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِى ٤١ ٱذْهَبْ أَنتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِـَٔايَٰتِى وَلَا تَنِيَا فِى ذِكْرِى ٤٢

“All that you requested has been granted, O Musa! And surely We had shown you favour before, when We inspired your mother with this: 'Put him into a box, then put it into the river. The river will wash it ashore, and he will be taken by [Pharaoh,] an enemy of Mine and his.' And I endeared you with love from Me [O Moses] so that you would be brought up under My [watchful] Eye. [Remember] when your sister came along and proposed, 'Shall I direct you to someone who will nurse him?' So We reunited you with your mother so that her heart would be put at ease, and she would not grieve. [Later] you killed a man [by mistake], but We saved you from sorrow, as well as other tests We put you through. Then you stayed for a number of years among the people of Midian. Then you came here as pre-destined, O Musa! And I have selected you for My service. Go forth, you and your brother, with My signs and never falter in remembering Me."
(TaHa: 36-42)

Just like Musa, Allah has favoured you, you only need to count your blessings (you will never be able to count them all). Show more gratitude, remember Allah always and see how He increases His favours upon you.

O Allah forgive us of our sins of ingratitude and perfect Your favours upon us.



REFLECTIONS

AbdulBasit Balogun (Abu Umar)

REFLECTIONS

THE STORY OF MUSA, THE MAGICIANS AND THE POWER OF FAITH

When you're asked to talk about the power of faith in Allāh and how it elevates you from the lowest of ranks to the highest position possible, always remember the story of the Magicians and Prophet Musa (May the Peace and Blessing of Allah be Upon Him). These men worshipped Fir'aun, they adored him, feared him and placed him above everything else. He was literally their god. To the extent that they swore by him when they were about to challenge Musa into a face-off.

Allāh mentioned about them in the Qur'an:

فَأَلْقَوْا۟ حِبَالَهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوا۟ بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ ٱلْغَٰلِبُونَ

So they threw their ropes and their sticks, and said: By the might of Fir'aun (Pharaoh), it is we who will certainly win! [Surah Ash-Shu'arā: 44]

Inadvertently, Musa, the messenger of Allāh who was

acting upon the order of his Creator and was backed by Him came out victorious. His staff swallowed every kind of magic they made.

فَأَلْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ

Then Mûsâ (Moses) threw his stick, and behold, it swallowed up all that they falsely showed! [Surah Ash-Shu'arā: 45]

'What happened afterwards, they all went down immediately in prostration declaring their faith in the Lord of Musa and Hārun. They denied and defied their master in Fir'aun without questioning or seeking his permission.

What would make these men who had zero knowledge about Allāh prior to that encounter believe in an instant? It is the power of miracle and faith. These men have reached the peak of magic. They knew no one on the face of the earth at that time could beat them. They have honed that skill so well that Fir'aun trusted them to deliver. They were confident that they would because it was their bread and butter. As soon as Musa defeated them, they knew it was something out of the ordinary. Whatever could beat them at that time is not human and they're ready to succumb themselves to it and it got so deep in their heart that they were willing to give up their lives for the new-found faith.

That's what faith does to the believer. The worst of men can be transformed into the best in a heartbeat because of his belief in Allāh. A similar example could be found in the stories of many companions of the Prophet . Notably Umar bn Khattab who was the fiercest enemies of Islam and he switched to become the leaders of the Muslims that Allāh used to strengthen the Muslims at the harshest of time. He read a few verses of the Qur'an and became convinced.

Furthermore, we should understand that this faith in Islam is a gift that Allāh bestows on whoever he wills. If you are a Muslim by birth or a revert, you were chosen by Allāh and you should be grateful to Allāh for that. Allāh says:

فَمَن يُرِدِ ٱللَّهُ أَن يَهۡدِيَهُۥ يَشۡرَحۡ صَدۡرَهُۥ لِلۡإِسۡلَٰمِۖ وَمَن يُرِدۡ أَن يُضِلَّهُۥ يَجۡعَلۡ صَدۡرَهُۥ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يَجۡعَلُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلرِّجۡسَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤۡمِنُونَ

And whomsoever Allāh wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam; and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky. Thus, Allāh puts the wrath on those who believe not. [Surah Al-An'ām: 125]

The gift of faith that Allāh has given you on a platter of gold is what has led some people astray. It is what some people are looking for that led them to the practice of other religions. Protect it by adhering to the dictates of

the Qur'an and Sunnah, pray and do righteous deeds and never have the feeling that you cannot be replaced, for that's very easy for Allāh to do. This is because our hearts are in the Hands of Allāh and He turns it the way He wants.

عَنْ أَنَسٍ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَليه وَسلم يَكْثِرُ أَنْ يُقُولُ ""يَا مُقَلِّبَ القُلُوبَ ثَبِتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِيْنِكِ"، فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ آمَنَّا بِكَ وَبِمَا جِئْتَ بِهِ فَهَلْ تَخَافُ عَلَيْنَا قَالَ "نَعَمْ إِنَّ القُلُوبَ بَيْنَ أَصَبُعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ اللهِ يُقَلِّبُهَا كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ"

Anas narrated: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w) would often say: Ya Muqallibal-qulub, thabbit qalbi 'ala dinik ('O Changer of the Hearts! Strengthen my heart upon Your Religion.)' So I said: 'O Prophet of Allāh! We believe in you and what you have come with, but do you fear for us?' He said: 'Yes, indeed the hearts are between two Fingers of Allāh's Fingers, He changes them as He wills.'" [49]

[49] Tirmidhi 2140

THE GREATEST STORY IS THE STORY OF PROPHET YUSUF

If you're someone who loves to read novels, fiction or nonfiction, biographies and autobiographies or you were a student of arts in your secondary school you would understand how good someone has to be to be a prize-winning storyteller. At least Dan Brown, James Yardley Chase, Jane Austin, William Shakespeare, Chinua Achebe, Femi Osofisan and a host of others are not pushovers when it comes to telling stories. In retrospect, if you are conversant with the Qur'an, you will definitely agree that the Qur'an is the best in terms of stories too. And the book speaks for itself when Allāh revealed the best story in the history of mankind. The twelfth chapter of the Qur'an which is the story of Prophet Yusuf (alayhi salaam).

Allāh says:

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ ٱلْقَصَصِ بِمَآ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ هَٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانَ وَإِن كُنتَ مِن قَبْلِهِۦ لَمِنَ ٱلْغَٰفِلِينَ

We relate unto you (Muhammad صلى الله وسلم) the best of stories through Our Revelations unto you, of this Qur'ân. And before this (i.e. before the coming of Divine Revelation to you), you were among those who knew

nothing about it (the Qur'ân). [Surah Yūsuf: 3]

Suratu Yusuf offers a lot of lessons that we can apply to many aspects of our lives. Here are some of the key lessons:

1. Prophet Yusuf (alayhi salaam) encountered many trials, he was betrayed by his brothers due to jealousy and envy, sold into slavery, falsely accused because he refused to let his master's wife have her way over him and was imprisoned despite his innocence. Despite these hardships, he remained patient and steadfast.

A life without difficulty is inevitable for a Muslim. They come in different forms to different people but enduring them with patience and trust in Allāh will lead to eventual relief and success. The rewards in this world and the hereafter are unimaginable.

2. Regardless of the betrayal and harm from his brothers towards him. He understood it was envy and they were just trying to get their father's love too.

He forgave his brothers at a position where he decided to do whatever he wanted to them. To him, it was part of Allāh's predestination.

3. Prophet Yusuf's rise from being thrown into a well, not knowing what would happen to him to becoming

a ruler in Egypt is a testament to the fact that Allāh had a plan for him even in the moments where things felt dark and hopeless. A moment of despair later became a stepping stone to greatness.

If you're in a bad situation, keep your head up and put your trust in Allāh. He has a plan for you and only trust and patience will make it happen.

4. In every circumstance, try to maintain your moral integrity even if it will cost you your freedom. He was tempted by his master's wife, he refused and even preferred prison over what she and the other woman wanted. Let the Taqwa of Allāh guide you whenever you're faced with such a situation. The same moral integrity he had was the reason why he gained his freedom and rose to become a powerful man in a kingdom where he wasn't even a citizen.

5. Who would have thought that Prophet Yusuf's ability to interpret dreams would be the reason why he would be released from prison or would even become a minister in the state? Not me but Allāh can elevate you with anything. Yours is to be prepared for it.

TAKE YOURSELF TO ACCOUNT BEFORE THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

There's a popular *Yorùbá* adage that we use to describe self-accountability, *Òkùnkùn ò ní kùn ki onínú má mọ inú*. It means "No matter how dark it gets; everyone knows what's in their minds". You would think that the people who coined this adage read the Qur'an because there's a similar verse in the Qur'an that refers to this point. Allāh says in Suratul Qiyamah:

بَلِ ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِۦ بَصِيرَةٌ

Nay! Man is a witness against himself [Surah Al-Qiyāmah: 14]

The point I want to make with this verse is that we all know what we are. We all know what we are doing. The righteous people know themselves and the evil doers know themselves as well. If you're righteous, keep it up and purify your intentions and Allāh will reward your righteousness. If you're involved in evil deeds, put an end to it. You don't know when your time will come. Do good deeds and seek for Allāh's forgiveness.

As matter of fact, whatever the perception of people about you, you know what you are and that is what Allāh

will judge you by. Some people see you as a pious and steadfast person while some see you as a hypocrite who is disguising. What is important is your relationship with Allāh. The praise of your supporters should not get into your head and the mockery by your detractors should not bother you. Ensure that your relationship with Allāh is a healthy one. That is what matters the most.

My advice to you is that you should take yourself to account before the day of accountability.

REFUTING THE ALLEGATION THAT THE QUR'AN WAS FROM SHAYTAN

One of the popular polemics of the enemies of Islam against the Prophet ﷺ is that the revelations he received was from the Devil. How many Muslims get incensed by this because it's an insult to our Prophet ﷺ. This does not actually make sense because, it is not possible for Shaytan to give revelation to a prophet who is trying to stop the things that are beloved to him (Shaytan).

Allāh says:

يُؤْتِي ٱلْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَمَن يُؤْتَ ٱلْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّآ أُو۟لُوا۟ ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ

Shaitân (Satan) threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahshâ (evil deeds, illegal sexual intercourse, sins); whereas Allāh promises you forgiveness from Himself and bounty, and Allāh is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower [Surah Al-Baqarah: 268]

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ grew up in Makkah at the time when idol worship and paganism was the religion of the day. He grew up in an environment where alcohol consumption gambling, adultery, tribal wars, burying

female children alive, usury, and so many evil practices were common. This is something that was condemned by Allāh in the books of the Prophets before him.

Imagine a revelation telling people to abandon idol worship and embrace worship of One God (Tawheed) coming from the devil who is trying to misguide us! How does that sound to you? It does not make sense.

A Prophet was sent to uphold ties of kinship. To ban alcohol consumption. His revelation encourages us to be kind to our parents and family. We should be just to everyone regardless of their status. This does not sound like something that would come from Shaytan. It is in fact a book that teaches us about how to avoid the traps of Shaytan.

What I want you to understand today is that anyone who tries to criticize Islam, be it a non-Muslim or a misguided Muslim, will never be intellectually consistent. They always fail to be coherent. That's why you find them jumping from one thing to another.

May Allāh grant us guidance.

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE QUR'AN

I was watching a video on social media where a Muslim brother was debating with a Christian. The brother made mention that one of the reasons why the Qur'ān is superior to every book in the history of mankind is that it can be reproduced even if all the manuscripts vanish. If every copy of the manuscripts that date to the first century of Islam to the present day ceases to exist, if every printed copy of the Qur'ān that we have in the world today is put together and destroyed, we will not worry because the Qur'an can easily be reproduced from the minds of its memorizers.

This is something that other religions cannot boast of because they do not have that privilege. If their scriptures will survive this test, it would be Muslims who will help them achieve it. This is because the Qur'an was not only preserved in writing. It is preserved by memorization. This is a tradition that has continued and will continue until the day of judgment.

This will not even come from the scholars, but from children under the age of 10 who do not even speak the language of the Qur'an.

There is a street in Kano State, Nigeria along Kurmi area named after memorizers of the Qur'an. These kids will not only memorize but will also write the Qur'an from their memory.

This is an age long tradition across the northern part of Nigeria and West Africa at large. Similar schools like that exist today across the Muslim world.

Furthermore, Allāh's promise to protect this Qur'an is a testament to its miraculous nature.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ

Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur'ān) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption) [Surah Al-Hijr: 9]

"This Verse is a challenge to mankind and everyone is obliged to believe in the miracles of this Qur'ān. It is a clear fact that more than 1400 years have elapsed and not a single word of this Qur'ān has been changed, although the disbelievers tried their utmost to change it in every way, but they failed miserably in their efforts. As it is mentioned in this holy verse: We will guard it.

By Allâh! He has guarded it. On the contrary, all the other holy books [the Taurât (Torah), the Injeel (Gospel).] have been corrupted in the form of additions or alterations in

the original text.”[50]

In over 1400 years no one has been able to distort, remove or even reproduce anything like it. Its protection is made so easy that even a non-Arab child from the cold mountains of Dagestan, Britain, Mali, Nigeria, Mexico, Papua New Guinea can memorize and recite it.

It should be a source of pride for you as a Muslim that your book has not and will not suffer the kind of mutilation that was done to the Torah and the Injeel.

The book has been the same and the message is as authentic as it was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ.

Let us try to encourage ourselves and our children to be from the generation whom Allāh will use to preserve his revelation. Enroll yourselves and family to Qur'an schools. So that you will be among those who Allāh will elevate on the day of judgment.

[49] Dr. Muhsin Khan and Shaykh Taqiudeen Hilali